

Context:

School location	Nørre Fælled Skole, Copenhagen, Denmark
Details about students	Age range: 6-16 (year 0-9) Approximate number on roll: 470 (2020/2021) Most students come from the nearby neighbourhood. There is a sports track from year 7 gathering students from all of Copenhagen
School premises	Red brick building designed by the city architect, erected 1932. Several later extensions and reconstructions
School context	City school, food school (students participate together with a chef in preparing the hot school lunch), sport track from year 7.
Type of activity	Workshop for the school leader, a group of teachers and students, and a municipal employee
Stage in design process:	Between planning and re-construction, in use reflection



Photos: Martin Toft Burchardi Bendtsen/Arkitekturbilleder.dk

Tool used **stories of Educational Spaces (SES):** [Stories of Educational Spaces \(SES\)](#)
- [CoReD - Newcastle University \(ncl.ac.uk\)](#)

In the tool activities, well-liked and/or interesting places at the school are selected and then knowledge, imagination and storytelling are used to explore and further develop the places' past, present and potential future use.

The tool may contribute to an increased awareness of the physical environment and its significance and use for well-being and educational purposes. In addition, the tool may contribute to the development of a shared place-based affiliation. The tool can be used for smaller, self-driven development processes of the physical learning environment and as a prelude to both smaller and larger renovation projects carried out by external partners.

The tool is ideal for creating dialogues about spaces between teachers, students, school leaders and architects as workshops can be held across the various groups.

Rationale for activity and tool adopted

The school is in the middle of a renovation process mainly focusing on installing a new ventilation system but also renovating selected areas in the school (the atriums), reorganising for a dining area, shifting the location of the specialised classrooms, and building a new gym hall. The workshop was part of discussing and holding on to the matter of the pedagogical aspects of school space and doing this through including school personal and students, the everyday users of the school. The tool 'stories of educational spaces' was chosen with the purpose of making use of the history and the users experiences with the place when thinking future re-adaption of existing spaces

Case study description: Process

Introduction

The workshop started with freshly baked cake, tea and coffee around a large table in the school's meeting and project work room. After a welcome and presentation round, the researchers from the CoReD-project, Bodil Bøjer and Lisa Rosen Rasmussen, introduced to the overall project of CoReD and to the tool 'stories of educational spaces'. The participants

were instructed in the work with the tool. The participants were given instruction sheets with the following text:

Choose a place at school that you think is particularly interesting / stimulating / important for past, present and / or future school activities. The place can also be chosen because it is perceived as overlooked.

Which places at school mean something to you? What is important to remember, preserve, develop, change?

1. Describe how the site is being used today

- Which actors (e.g. teachers or students) use the place? What social and / or educational activities take place on site? How is the physical setting?

Visualize the current use of the site using pictures, drawings, or the like

/ Notes and illustrations are added to your Padlet-page under the tab 'present'

2. Narrate a story that has / could have taken place on this site in the past (20, 50 or 100 years ago)

- The story must include actors (e.g. teachers or students), social and / or educational activities and descriptions of the physical settings

Visualize the place in the story using pictures, drawings, or the like

/ Notes and illustrations are added to your Padlet-page under the tab 'past'

3. Narrate a story that could take place on this site in the future (e.g. in 2, 6 or 10 years)

- The story must include actors (e.g. teachers or students), social and / or pedagogical activities and descriptions of physical settings.

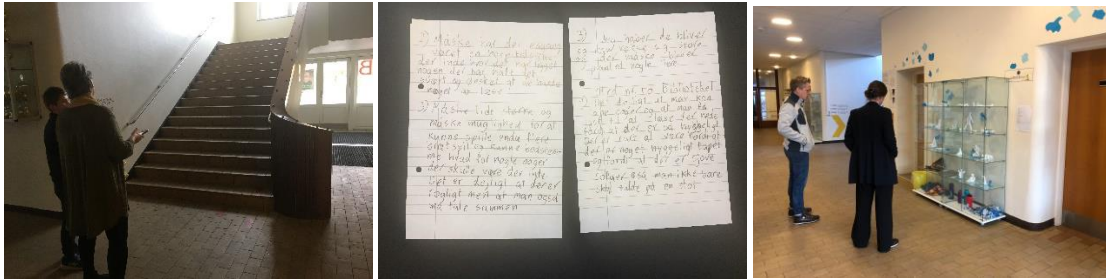
Visualize the place in the story using pictures, drawings, or the like

/ Notes and illustrations are added to your Padlet-page under the tab 'future'

The participants were told they would work in smaller groups and that each group had to choose and visit 1-3 places at the school, describe the present use of the spaces and narrate/imagine stories of their use in the past and in the future. There was a brief introduction giving advice on how to select spaces, how to describe and narrate stories about the spaces and finally how to upload photos, drawings and other illustrations together with the descriptions onto a shared Padlet with the purpose of being able to share stories in the last part of the workshop.

Participants were 4 students from year 6, 3 teachers involved in the reconstruction of the school, the school leader and a municipal employee assigned to help mainly with practical tasks during the reconstruction process. Two researchers from the CoReD project (Bodil Bøjer and Lisa Rosén Rasmussen) held the workshop.

Creating stories (school walks): The group was divided into 4 teams of 2 (an adult and a student). The last teacher met with one of the researchers. The small teams went out and walked around the school indoors and outdoors, selecting their spaces and within the teams they helped each other describe and narrate about the present, the past and the future. The teams' short descriptions of the imagined and/or real past, present and future uses were added to a shared Padlet-page together with photos taken by the teams. The narrated stories about the past and the present were by some of the groups written down by hand.








Sharing stories (presentations and discussions)

After the school walks and after finishing and uploading their work on the Padlet, the large group gathered in the meeting room. Using a large screen showing the shared Padlet, each group presented their work, elaborated and reflected on their text and pictures from the Padlet and some of the groups read aloud the small stories they had composed imagining an event in the past and in the future.



After each team had presented there was a discussion in the large group where the other teams posed questions but also added to the knowledge about the individual places, remembering historical or personal stories attached to it. Finally, there were discussions about the potential future of the individual places but also about the more general insights and ideas that came with the presentations.

padlet
 Bodø11 • 20 minutter
Gendannelse af SES
 Stories of Educational Spaces

Gruppe 1	Gruppe 2	Gruppe 3	Gruppe 4	Gruppe 5
Musik og dansestudie  Gamle dage - ingen elektriske instrumenter Streng lærer - musik til optog. Fremtiden - mere plads på gulvet til optræden. En slags lille scene til dans og plads til publikum. Musik lokale 50 år Ingen moderne ting Klaver var der nok Bongo tromme Normal guitar Gammel grøn tavle Måske musik til optog/testestykke Sjovt bare at spille læren var nok lidt streng -"hvis man spillede forkert "Hvad laver du?" "Det skal være perfekt"	Idrætssal/hal  Fortid, ingen højtalere, måske ingen rebbar Fremtid, Klærevæg, Altrix, rigtige størrelses baner  Læringscenter	Husene i træerne  Sted nr. 1: 1) Husene i træerne Det bliver brugt til at klatre i og bygge huse. Det bruges af 2 til 4 klasse Der er ikke noget bestemt man skal lave deroppe. Det er fedt at det er udenfor i naturen 2) Jeg tror at det har været der siden skolen var et hospital. Vi tror at hospitalet plantede træerne så man kunne være tæt på naturen og føle sig tryk og man kan følge med i årstiderne og få håb. 3) Jeg håber de bliver og kan	 Historie Nogle af legeredskaberne er defekte eller skiftet ud. Der har været andre gynger, der nu er dækgynger, der har været en svinggyngel i skoven, som er blevet udskiftet. Nogle af redskaberne har været der i lang tid og virker stadig fx rampen, den store og den lille karrusel. I gamle dage var gården delt i en drengedel og en pigeedel. Der var malet en hvid streg i midten af gården og man måtte ikke gå over stregen.	 Nu. Mange går igennem denne gang. Der er udstilling både på vægge og i montre. Det er ikke organiseret og mest tilfældigt. Gangen anvendes også som depot og andet Fortid. Gang til at gå igennem. Der har aldrig været en plan for gangen Fremtid. Håndværk og designkrøner bruger gangen til udstillingsareal. Der er en smilet og latetisk løsning med skæb eller lign til ophæng og udstilling. Der er mulighed for at skrive hvem der udstiller

Case study description: Outcomes

The workshop and the work and dialogues in the smaller teams and in the larger group gave an opportunity for the participants to share knowledge about and experiences of the shared space.

On the present: Everyday use, valuations, and attachments

On an everyday level the work and discussions about the selected places gave insight into the present use of existing school spaces.

Hidden and valued spaces – students' view: The students pointed to perhaps hidden and/or neglected spaces, which they valued in their everyday school life. An example of this was the trees at the back of the school yard which were used during breaks and which gave privacy, shelter, and room for climbing and different kind of play: *The trees are used for climbing and to build houses in. there is nothing specific up there. It is cool that it is outside in the nature* (notes on workshop-Padlet). Another place that was brought up by several students was the library, which had an alternative layout, corners, and soft furniture: *It is great because you can borrow books and that you feel like reading there because it is so cosy. It is nice because there is some cosy wallpaper and because there are fun sofas, and you don not just sit on a chair* (notes on workshop-Padlet). This was brought forward as a well-liked place, stressing the calm and cosy atmosphere of it and its invitation to socialise and work in other ways than the classrooms and the playground. The students' input was acknowledged by the school personal giving way for a discussion of how the values of these places could be not just restored but perhaps also developed, expanded and transferred to other places.



Tips and tricks – teachers' view: In the presentation round, the teachers continuously brought about reflections, tips and tricks on how they made use of the classrooms during classes and how they dealt with some of the challenges e.g., teaching in small classrooms.

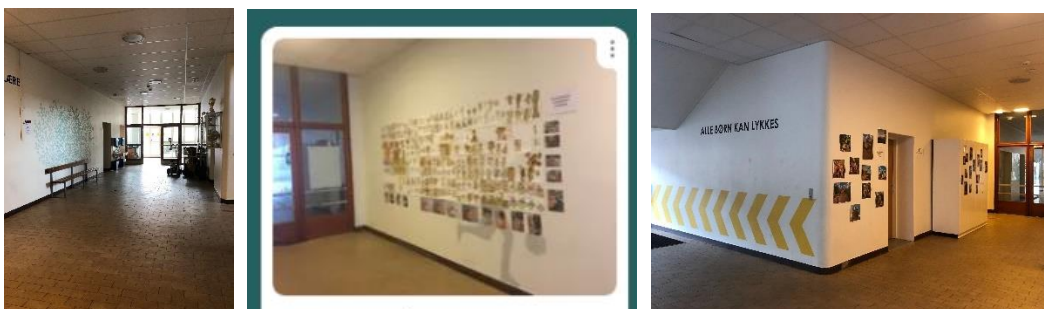
On the past: historical fragments and fantasies

The participants' work on making up stories about the past use of the building brought up fragments of historical knowledge. One of the stories was about the school's role as a German hospital during WW2: This knowledge generated curiosity and excitement among the participants and steamed imagination and discussions about how this could have been played out: about the library: *Maybe there has been a hospital room in there where someone has had a hard time and wished for something to read? (notes on workshop-Padlet).* In other conversations the students and teachers used material traces in the spaces to make up stories. An example is the storying of two students meeting in one of the atriums, which is today somewhat defaulted and waiting to be renovated: *Peter and Anna were looking forward to the breaks. They went to separate classes and were perhaps a little in love with each other. They had agreed to meet in the atrium, where they knew there were not so many others and where Peter could pick a flower for Anna (Story from the workshop).* The task of storytelling could in this example be seen as a way of introducing the matter of feeling and relations for the experience of schooling.



On the future: and on the ties between past-present-future

The wishes and visions for the future tied into the storying of the past and present, finding inspiration about green areas, trees and cozy and quiet spaces for play – asking for more cosy places like the library or more green areas like the atrium and more trees. Also critique of underused areas were an outset for rethinking and possible redesigning. This was the case with the hall way, which was said to be the busiest place in the school – as everyone had to pass through it – and which was used for exhibiting art work in intermittent setups (sometimes with things hanging around for years) but also for temporary storage of various things such as chairs and other furniture.



The suggestion was to design some aesthetic and easy-to-use arrangements for shifting exhibitions – building upon the current use and including the art teachers.

Moreover, ideas for the future took outset in the materiality of the space. An example of this was how the broad and empty stair framed visions for a whole new seating and work area:

The stairs are fantastic but they are only used for walking up and down. Occasionally children sit there. But the acoustic is bad. In the future it could be fitted with sitting cubes, upholstered seats and given a name, maybe the Giraffe-area, the Flamingo or Einstein to make it easy to tell students to go to that area and work, it would be a name for communication. It would be a place to go and find peace. The windows are wide and could perhaps have room for benches and with tables that could fold down. The students could sit there and work next to each other or in groups (note from group discussion).



Taking up the tips and tricks from the teachers about how to tackle teaching in the small classroom it was stressed how it was important to make the tables face the direct direction when setting them up. The discussions also led to more open brainstorming about future layouts for the school and specifically for the classrooms. The wishes concerned flexible furniture making it easier to reorganise the small classroom and even an idea of a classroom with whiteboard on all walls, making it possible to write on them and hang and rearrange things on them using magnetic tape.

Knowledge sharing and matters of belonging

Summing up, the workshop offered a possibility for school personal and students to share experiences and knowledge of school space and of what was appreciated and what could be challenging. In the brief evaluation of the workshop the importance of the students' voice and how it gave an interesting insight into the lived space of the school was emphasized by the participants. The workshop framed conversations between grown-ups and students giving them a chance to discuss values of space but also aspects of schooling in general. As it came to the historical knowledge sharing and the storytelling task, they may ground a shared attachment to the place and in the evaluation the possibility of using the history of the building more actively was brought up as an idea. Meanwhile, tips and tricks brought about discussions about more educational manoeuvres and the relationship between teaching strategies and material facilities. The historical perspectives of the past and the present in form of knowledge, stories and materiality tied into and was used as a source of inspiration for thinking about the future.